Development of Tourist Infrastructure in Backward Regions

*394. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India ranks Fifth among world's tourist hotspots according to the latest survey conducted by Conde Nast Readers' Travel Awards;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) which are the major factors that have favoured India as an attractive tourist destination; and

(d) what is the action plan of the Centre to develop the infrastructure in certain backward regions which have big tourist potential such as Orissa, to further and to tourist arrivals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) The Conde Nast Traveller, UK, in its Readers' Travel Awards 2005 has rated India Fifth amongst the top 20 tourist destinations of the world. The other four countries are New Zealand, Thailand, Australia and Italy.

(c) India's vast bounties of nature like its majestic mountains, lovely beaches, wonderful wildlife and enchanting bird sanctuaries; its great treasures of art, architecture and philosophical thought, and; our practices of yoga, Siddha, Ayurveda and Unani system of dealing with physical and mental ailments are great sources of attraction for tourists. The branding exercise taken by the Ministry of Tourism to communicate one clear image of India across the globe, and intensive campaign launched by it in the International Press, International TV, Internet, and also by bringing out collaterals, etc. created an anticipation and desire amongst the foreign tourists to visit India.

(d) In order to asist the States/UTs to prepare their action plan to develop the infrastructure, including the backward regions having big potential, 20 Year Perspective Plans were formulated, and sent to them for preparing their action plans accordingly. Although development of places of tourist interest is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments,

the Union Ministry of Tourism provides financial asistance to the States/ UTs for the projects, which are prioritized in consultation with them every year under its various schemes. For the State of Orissa, during 2002-03 to 2004-05, 14 projects have been prioritized and an amount of about Rs. 1818 lakh sanctioned.

Closure of Petrol Pumps in Uttar Pradesh

*395. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that oil mafia is operating in Uttar Pradesh in a big way;

(b) if so, what Government are doing to ensure unadulterated oil and LPG supply in Uttar Pradesh;

(c) whether Government are aware that LPG is being mixed with water and such dealers have not been prosecuted yet;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) how many petrol pumps sealed in Uttar Pradesh and dealers prosecuted so far?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) The possibility of adulteration of petrol/diesel by some unscrupulous elements cannot be ruled out due to huge price difference between petrol/diesel and various adulterants available in the market and the easy miscibility of these products with petrol/diesel. Government are aware of reports of mafia operations in Uttar Pradesh, but the primary responsibility for dealing with such law and order issue vests, under the Constitution, with the State Governments. The recent alleged murder of a sales officer of IOC in the state in connection with an inspection he was conducting has caused considerable concern. Secretary, Petroleum recently took a meeting on this with State Chief Secretaries and their representatives

The action taken by the Government/Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) in containing the menace of adulteration in petrol/ diesel include the following:—